

10/5/17



Photo: West Central Illinois, courtesy of Barrie McVey

Northwest

The trees are turning to golden yellow in the bottoms around Whiteside County. Some hard maples in the uplands are turning colors to a bright red and orange.

Quad Cities region. Roadsides: Color is scaling down as flowers turn to seed; dogwoods and sumac with maroon to scarlet color. Fields: Harvesting has begun and standing corn is dull green to light brown; bean fields are turning light brown as beans mature. Woodlands: Dominant color is still a dull green and yellowish green; most species' color is variable, but walnut is generally further along than others and losing leaves; black cherry leaves are turning yellow and brownish yellow and falling; White ash is turning pinkish purple; green ash is turning yellow. In general, vines are showing the most color from orangish yellow to scarlet. Urban: Little fall color progress the past few weeks...most notable are white

ash turning a pinkish purple, red maple turning maroon to scarlet (highly variable); crimson king maple leaves are getting brown tips; burning bushes showing maroon, some more scarlet and some orange-red; crabapple leaves are turning yellowish brown and falling.

Northeast

Around the McHenry County area, the silver maples and hickories are browning and dropping leaves. Cottonwoods have been quickly browning also. Sumac has started to change to a dark red.

In NE Illinois around Will County, the colors are progressing slowly as dry weather continued into this week. Leaves are far from brilliant. Woodlands: Maples are turning dull yellow along with hackberry, some cherry, hickory, catalpa, and hawthorns. Some hard maples are showing yellow. Most oaks are showing very little color. Sumac and vines are peeked in red. Urban: Hard and soft maple varieties are progressing with color from top down (showing recent drought stress). Linden, elm, and locust have all turned yellow and brown, and leaves are falling. Elm, cottonwood, some hickory, silver maple, basswood, walnut and ash have leaves that are falling, and are mainly green and yellowish.

West Central

In West Central Illinois, the area along the Great River Road from Alton to the Greene-Scott County line has trees that are coming along, but are still 2 -3 weeks from the peak colors. Currently, the maples are developing good reds, oranges and yellows. The dogwoods, sumacs and sassafras have good reds. The green ash are yellow and the white ash starting to show some purple. The oaks have a little bit of red, orange and brown.

Central

It looks like the fine fall color is still a couple of weeks away in the LaSalle County area. When you look at the bluffs along the Illinois River valley, you can see a hint of the change in the distance as individual trees start to turn in the backdrop of the green landscape. Very few oaks have any color yet, but a few sugar maples have some color now - red/orange/yellow. They really glow on the sunny days against the green backdrop. There are some nice specimens along IL RT 71 in Starved Rock Country. A lot of the hickories are browning up, but some are turning the more typical fall yellow and are really standing out. Some understory ironwoods are also going yellow. Cottonwoods and redbuds are dropping leaves in many spots, along with the black walnuts. Blackberry and black raspberry bushes are turning red to dark red. Poison ivy and Virginia creeper are doing the same. All of these can be found in the roadside brush lines. If hiking, many of the wildflowers have gone to seed now, which means there are a lot of stick tights and burs out there. Keep your dog on a leash to save time picking them out of their fur and wear

cloth-like dense denim or nylon outer shells to keep them from sticking to you easily. And with all the dryness in the woods, be ever careful with campfires and cigarettes.

The colors in the Mason County area are getting better this week and should be good for the Spoon River Drive the next two weekends. This region of central Illinois is still 2 -3 weeks from the peak colors. Currently the maples are developing good reds, oranges and yellows. The dogwoods, sumacs and sassafras have good reds. The green ashes are yellow and the white ash starting to show some purple. The oaks have a little bit of red, but not much other color to them, except brown from the recent dry weather.

In the Sangamon County area, the walnuts are 80% in color. Still waiting for the maples to change, though there are some individual maples that are in color, which means within the next two weeks the rest will follow. In the Springfield area, a large percentage of trees are still green, with interspersed color in the foliage with some remarkable tops that have changed. The sycamores and cottonwoods are pretty much on schedule, yellowing toward the tops and working their way to the bottom of the tree. The warm, dry weather has delayed things in central Illinois, though this week's rain and cooler temperatures will probably cause an explosion of color in the coming days.

South

Around the Clinton County area, several of the sweet gum, green ash, cherry, black walnut, and sycamore leaves are turning yellow. Due the excessively dry weather recently, several of the previously listed trees aren't going through much of a color change, with leaves instead turning brown and dropping. Many of the sassafras and sumac continue to turn shades of red, but their leaves continue to drop. Several of the Virginia creeper and poison ivy vines are turning red.

Overall, most forest trees are green, but some early fall color can be seen in the flowering trees and things like persimmon in red in the Randolph County area.

Giant City State Park is still very, very dry, with a little more color here and there. Some of the yellows are starting to pop out and a few reds are making an appearance. Still a lot of green and some brown.

It has also been very dry in Pope County, so colors may be muted a bit. Still mainly green, starting to see some reds, vibrant yellows, with some browns mixed in.

In the Union County area, leaves are continuing to drop early due to dry conditions. There is some good color in the low-lying areas. The maple trees are turning yellow-orange-red, sumacs are turning purple-red, walnut-yellow, paw paw in the understory are turning yellow, and some purple dogwoods. Hickory trees are turning yellow/brown and are dropping quickly. Colors should continue to become brighter over the next few weeks.